

Last year 50,000 cases were filed in St. Louis Circuit Court. More than 340 trials went to a jury and 21,000 city residents reported for jury duty.

We understand that the legal process is often complicated and confusing to citizens. Our court, one of the busiest in Missouri, is committed to helping all citizens better understand the system of justice that touches all of our lives.



Residents in all parts of St. Louis share the same desire for attractive and safe communities and the city's circuit court system is an integral piece of this puzzle. The court plays a significant role in public safety and citizens have an understandable interest in what we do - just like we have an interest in what's going on in our neighborhoods. Along with City Hall and the police department, the court and the people who work here are on the front line everyday in the battle to keep the city of St. Louis a desirable place to live and work.

Whether a person is a juror, a crime victim, a defendant or even an adoptive parent, he/she will come in contact with St. Louis' court system.

The court has been active in hosting informational meetings for the city's neighborhood associations and other groups that are interested in learning more about the court process.

We have talked about the city's nationally recognized drug court, which is breaking the cycle of drug-addicted criminals spending their lives in and out of the court system. You may not know this but most men and women currently in Missouri's prisons are there because of a drug-related offense.

#### Top 10 Criminal Charges in Missouri

- Possession of controlled substance
- Theft/Stealing (\$500 - \$25,000)
- Distribution of a controlled substance
- Forgery
- Failure to pay child support
- Burglary - 2nd degree
- Armed criminal action
- Unlawful use of drug paraphernalia
- DWI - alcohol - persistent offender
- Tampering with a motor vehicle

We have also done presentations on juvenile crime in St. Louis, divorce and child custody proceedings, jury duty, crime victim assistance and Neighborhood Accountability Boards.

Whether we are inviting community groups to the courthouse or speaking at an association's monthly meeting the purpose is always the same - to hear from citizens and to increase public understanding of the St. Louis courts.



"The meeting was fantastic. I think it is great that the judges made themselves so available to us."

*-Dawn Owen, Clayton/Tamm Community Association*

"I think it was beneficial to understand our judicial court at a high level, have the opportunity to listen to judges speak about relevant issues and to learn about specific programs that can be helpful to your neighborhood," *-Dave Goldstick, Downtown St. Louis Residents Association.*

Our judges and staff are available to speak to any neighborhood or community organization in the city. To arrange for a guest speaker **Please call us at 622-5685** or: [mmurphy@courts.mo.gov](mailto:mmurphy@courts.mo.gov)

## Non-Partisan Court Plan

The Missouri Non-Partisan Court Plan governs the selection of circuit and associate circuit judges. Commissioners are selected by the judges of the circuit.

In addition, the Municipal Court Division handles cases arising under city ordinances. Municipal judges are appointed by the mayor. Appeals from municipal court go to the circuit court.

Appeals from circuit court go to the Missouri Court of Appeals Eastern District and to the Missouri Supreme Court.

Missouri's Non-Partisan Court Plan was created in 1940 and applies to associate and circuit court judges in St. Louis City/County and Kansas City (and two other circuit courts in western Missouri.) Judges in most parts of the state are still voted on in partisan elections, although the Plan is expanding with the addition of Greene County (the Springfield area) in 2008. The Plan is also how judges for the Supreme Court and Appeals Courts are chosen.

Under the Plan, a commission of laypersons, lawyers and an appellate court judge select three nominees for an open judgeship.

The governor then appoints one of those nominees to fill the vacancy. After serving a full year on the bench, judges must then face a retention election and receive more than 50 percent affirmative votes to earn a full term. Thereafter, judges again stand for retention at the end of each term - six years for judges and four years for associate judges.

## Helpful Numbers



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### Court Public Information Office

622-5685

Circuit Clerk

622-3728

Circuit Attorney

622-4941

Victim Services

622-4373

Police Dept. (public affairs)

444-5603

Neighborhood Stabilization Team

622-4628

Citizen's Service Bureau

622-4800

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri

256-8742



St. Louis Circuit Court

From the  
Bench to  
the Block

